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Remarks

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding Office Action mailed on 07/29/2004. The Office Action of 07/29/2004 rejected claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,453,022 of J.B. Weinman, Jr. (hereafter referred to as Weinman). Claims 1 and 6 are being amended.

Rejection of Claims 1-5 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

This rejection is respectfully traversed. Amended claim 1 recites:

A method for controlling a conference call of a plurality of communication terminals, comprising the steps of:

displaying on a first one of the plurality of communication terminals an identity of a second one of the plurality of communication terminals in response to a first signal from the first one of the plurality of communication terminals;

disabling audio information received from the second one of the plurality of communication terminals on the conference call in response to a second signal from the first one of the plurality of communication terminals; and

re-enabling the audio information received from the second one of the plurality of communication terminals on the conference call in response to a third signal from the second one of the plurality of communication terminals after the audio information from the second one of the plurality of communication terminals had previously been disabled by the second signal.

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Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that a system in accordance with the steps set forth in amended claim 1 would allow a first terminal to disable audio information from a second terminal being included in a conference call. Further, the second terminal can re-enable its audio information to be included in the conference after the audio information from the second terminal had been disabled by the first terminal. To re-enable the use of its audio information in the conference call, the second terminal transmits a third signal that overrides the operations of a second signal from the first terminal which had originally disabled the use of the audio information from the second terminal in the conference call.

In the example set forth in applicant's specification, page 3, line 17 through page 4, line 27, operations are described where a user of a station set 103 can disable the use of audio information being received from cellular telephone 119. However, the user of cellular telephone 119 can re-enable the use of the audio information from cellular telephone 119 on the conference by actuation of a button on cellular telephone 119. Clearly, in such system operations, the circuit performing the conferencing operations (e.g. conference circuit 106 in applicant's specification) must be able to receive and respond to signals from both station set 103 and cellular telephone 119 so that these signals control the utilization of audio information from cellular telephone 119.

The Office Action states that Weinman discloses:

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disabling (e.g., muting) audio information received from the second one (e.g., telephones "130" or "135") of the plurality of communication terminals on the conference call in response to a second signal from the first one (e.g., depressing mute button "315" or "425" by user of telephone "110") of the plurality of communication terminals (see column "315" or "425" in Figs 3-4; and col. 5, lns 9 - 18); and

enabling the audio information from the second one (e.g., telephones "130" or "135") of the plurality of communication terminals received from the second one (e.g., telephones "130" or "135") of the plurality of communication terminals on the conference call in response to a third signal from the second one of the plurality of communication terminals (see column "315" or "425" in Figs 3-4; and col. 5, lns 9 - 18).

Applicants disagree that Weinman discloses or suggests the above operations set forth in the Office Action. Rather, Weinman discloses a system where a multi-lined telephone (110) is coupled to one or more telephone lines (121 and 122) and associated with each of these telephone lines is an audio controller (115). (Column 3, lines 19-29.) However, only the user of the multi-lined telephone can control the operations of the audio controllers associated with the telephone lines servicing the multi-lined telephone. (Column 3, lines 46-55, FIG. 5 and descriptive text in Column 6, lines 3-38.) The audio controllers 215 of FIG. 2 also are under the control of the user of telephone 110 via control 217. (FIG. 2 and accompanying text.)

The Office Action states that the audio information from the second one of the plurality of communication terminals

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can be enabled from telephones 130 or 135 in response to a third signal from one of these telephones. However, Weinman makes no provision for the audio controller 115 or 215 associated with multi-lined telephone 110 to receive inputs from either telephones 130 or 135. This is quite clearly illustrated in FIG. 5.

Further, FIG. 8 illustrates an example in Weinman where user 501 has disabled information being received from the secret listener (telephone 130 or 135) so that the individual who is the secret listener can hear the audio information of the conference but can not transmit audio information to the conference. However, user 501 is the only individual who via the mechanism of the multi-lined telephone 110 can control element 502 of the audio controller which is utilized to block audio from the secret listener. The individual who is the secret listener can perform no action or generate any signal that can control the operation of element 502 and its associated input and output circuits such that the individual who is the secret listener can re-enable their audio information onto the conference.

Applicant's attorney respectfully requests that the Examiner point out in Weinman where the telephones 130 and 135 can control the audio controllers 115 or 215 associated with multi-lined telephone 110.

Clearly, the system disclosed in Weinman can not implement the steps of amended 1 since a second telephone

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such as telephone 130 or 135 can not control an audio controller 115 that is associated with multi-lined telephone 110.

In summary, Weinman does not anticipate amended claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b). Claims 2-5, as presently in the application, are directly or indirectly dependent from amended claim 1 and are patentable for at least the same reasons as amended claim 1.

Rejection of Claims 6-10 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b)

Amended claim 6 and dependent claims 2-10, as presently in the application, are patentable under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) for the same reasons as amended claim 1 and claims 2-5, as presently in the application.

Summary

In view of the foregoing, applicant's respectfully request consideration of amended claims 1 and 6, reconsideration of claims 2-5 and 7-10, as presently in the application, and allowance of these claims.

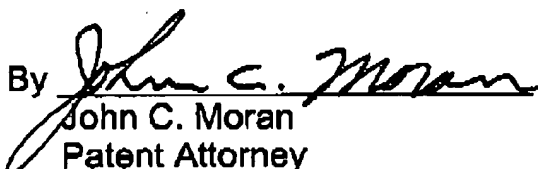
Although the foregoing is believed to be dispositive of the issues in the application, if the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution, the

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Examiner is invited to call applicants' attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully,

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